

CPYRGHT

'Guilt by Association'

JFK Defends CIA

The Central Intelligence Agency's chief in Viet Nam was described by informed officials today as the victim of "guilt by association" with strongman Ngo Dinh Nhu.

President Kennedy, at his news conference yesterday, vigorously defended the CIA against charges it has followed an independent policy in Viet Nam.

'CLOSE CONTROL'

"I can just assure you flatly," the President said, "but the CIA has not carried out independent activities but has operated under close control of the Director of Central Intelligence, operating with the co-operation of the National Security Council and under my instructions."

Mr. Kennedy praised John H. Richardson, recently recalled as CIA's director in Saigon, as "a very dedicated public servant." But he also was the first official to refer in public to Mr. Richardson's "transfer." Earlier reports had said Mr. Richardson was being called home for "consultation."

Informed sources here said the recent uproar over CIA's Viet Nam activities stemmed in part from its relationship with the Vietnamese governmental palace.

'SPECIAL FORCES'

CIA was instrumental in 1961 in setting up the "special forces," an elite military unit specializing in counter-guerrilla warfare.

The technically part of the Vietnamese army, the unit took its orders more or less directly from the palace rather than thru the general staff. This was to keep its operations as secret as possible.

Inside the palace, Nhu — President Diem's behind the scenes adviser — took a close interest in the special forces. The CIA maintained its liaison with the unit, and this put Nhu in liaison with the CIA and with Mr. Richardson, whose public title was First Secretary of the U. S. Embassy.

On Aug. 21 when Nhu ordered government raids on Buddhist pagodas, one unit of the special forces took part, becoming in effect a private army.

In the resulting political upheaval, U. S. officials stationed in Saigon bitterly denounced Nhu to U. S. newsmen and, because of the association, many also denounced Mr. Richardson.

The first wave of press dispatches from Saigon blew a good many of CIA's operations into the open and unmasked Mr. Richardson's Embassy "cover." Subsequently, CIA was accused of "insubordination." (UPI)

The bodies of four were recovered yesterday from the wreckage of a helicopter which crashed near the Bon River about 20 miles from the Laotian border. The body of a fifth was found at the site today.

Meanwhile, two Vietnamese were killed and six other persons — including three Americans — were wounded when a terrorist threw an American-made hand grenade into a hotel lobby in Can Tho, 80 miles north of Saigon.